UNDER THE RED AND BLACK STAR

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

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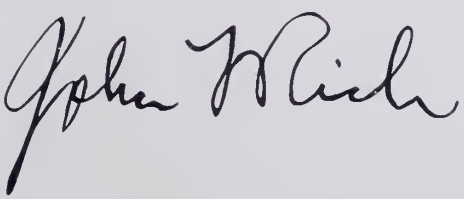
Foreword

THOSE who founded the American Friends Service Committee in 1917 were seeking an outlet for service and sacrifice in a time of war which, in contrast to the prevailing violence and ruin, would be healing and constructive. Back of their deeds was an ideal. They believed in the power of active and unstinted good will to take away the occasion of war.

Now, within a quarter-century, the world is plunged afresh into war more brutal and more inclusive than it has ever known. Was there false reasoning in the first conception of the Service Committee? Were its founders deluded in thinking that hatred and violence would give way before the insistent and irresistible forces of love? No, the years have confirmed, and not denied, the validity of this way of life. Those who have borne the Quaker Star can testify that the principle has been tested and not found wanting. If on a small scale it has worked miracles of reconciliation between individuals and groups, how greatly it would serve mankind when applied as a principle of national and international policy.

Yet we are not the same as in the first flush of enthusiasm in 1917. If we are grateful for the experience of twenty-six years which, in a sense, have been years of apprenticeship, we also are sobered by the deeper insight these experiences have brought. As an English Friend has expressed it, "we are driven back to something more fundamental than any form of active, healing service. We are driven back to the quality of our daily living. Perhaps it is good for us to be reminded that 'doing ends in death'. Mere doing, 'giving our bodies to be burned', is as vain as mere talking. The kindling act, like the kindling word, is the act, the word, that springs out of the deep places of a dedicated spirit."

Whereas, in the beginning, the Service Committee was an untried instrument in the hands of a tiny group of such dedicated spirits, today it embraces a wide fellowship of men and women across many barriers of race, creed and color. A generation of young people has grown up under its tutelage. Its techniques have been wrought out with patience and devotion. Thus equipped, we begin a new era of service tempered with humility. May it bring to all of us an enlargement of spirit and a sense of the presence of God.



February 23, 1943

THE American Friends Service Committee is an incorporated body under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania. Representing most of the American Yearly Meetings of Friends, its Board of Directors is composed of members of the Society of Friends. Membership in the Committee and its subcommittees is open to all interested persons, as are also the opportunities for service under the Committee.

UNDER THE RED AND BLACK STAR

Friends service

The American Friends Service Committee represents the Society of Friends in fields of social action. As the expression of a small religious group, its undertakings normally would be small but for the fact that they enlist the support of many other like-minded people. Today, the work of the Committee, made possible by the spiritual and material assistance of these "friends of the Friends", encompasses a wide range of projects both at home and abroad. It is for those who share in the work, and for those who would know more about it, that this brief account is prepared, of the history, policies and methods of the service carried on under the Red and Black Star, the emblem of the Service Committee.

Whatever concerns human beings in distress, whatever may help free individuals, groups and nations from fear, hate or narrowness—these are subjects for the Committee's consideration. Although a corporate activity, many Service Committee undertakings originated in the inward insight of a single individual. As Rufus Jones said when the Committee was twenty years old, "Some of its most important concerns had their birth in a sensitive person's soul, but all its decisions have been arrived at through corporate action. Its twenty years of history have given many glowing verifications of the wisdom of arriving at decisions by taking 'the sense of the meeting.' Nothing in this long period has been settled by a majority vote which overrode the judgment of a strong minority opposed to it."

Once accepted by the Committee, a new "concern" becomes the charge of the section or department of the Committee most experienced in that field. If relief work develops, or some other large scale undertaking, a special committee may be appointed to deal with it.

THE QUAKER BACKGROUND

From the time of their rise in the Seventeenth Century, Quakers always have been sensitive to the ills of humanity. Their concern for suffering men and women is rooted in a reverence for human personality. The slave, the prisoner, the exploited laborer, the underprivileged child, from the Quaker point of view, are all human beings divinely endowed with the right of physical and spiritual fulfillment.

Because Quakers believe that their religious faith must go hand in hand with action, each generation has produced its Quaker champions of the despised and defenseless. Some have pioneered in social reform or have devoted their lives to humanitarian work. Most, however, have worked quietly within the framework of their daily occupations to make life for others a little closer to the heart's ideal. The greatest contribution of these men and women has been the spirit in which their work has been carried on. When true to its heritage, Quaker service goes further than charitable relief. There is a more fundamental objective than passing kindliness. Quaker service tries to strike at the cause of the social ill rather than to cover up its effect. It extends itself as much to the aggressor as to the victim of aggression, that both may be brought into cooperative harmony. Accepting change in human affairs as inevitable and even desirable, the Quaker way is to steer toward the goal through reasonable and peaceful means. It is irrevocably opposed to violence or coercion, even though the ends in view seem good.

This Quaker background is implicit in the policies and choice of projects of the American Friends Service Committee. It explains why the Committee tries to be impartial though deeply involved with controversial problems. It explains why the Committee engages in war relief or aids the victims of industrial dislocation rather than being drawn to relieve natural disasters which present no problem of human conflict and in which other agencies can operate effectively. The Committee often seems to be most useful in situations where partisan groups are working against each other. There, the desire to be helpful, impartially, has a reconciling influence. On a basis of confidence, work can be done on both sides and antagonists frequently can be drawn into constructive fellowship.

The Origin of the Service Committee

The Committee was started in 1917 by Friends who were deeply concerned for the spiritual values endangered by the World War. It enrolled the youth of the Society of Friends and others anxious to make a constructive and non-military contribution to the world, through relief and reconstruction activities in the devastated regions of France.

These young men wore a Quaker-gray uniform and the red and black Service Star which first had been worn by English Friends engaged in relief work during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The work in France during the World War enlisted about 600 men and women at its peak. It was a friendly collaboration of English and Americans who repaired thousands of shell-damaged houses and built hundreds of new cottages. Peasants returning to their ravaged farms were provided with clothing, beds, utensils, seeds, rabbits and fowls, to begin life again.

Refugee children were housed and cared for; a maternity hospital was founded which continued until the present war.

What had started as a venture of faith aroused wide public sympathy. The work was aided by the American Red Cross and people of every religion and political opinion gave money and goods to the Friends. The American Committee alone received in its first ten years over $12,000,000 in cash and much more than that amount in clothing, seeds, foods, drugs and other goods. What struck the popular imagination was the impartiality of the work in a world so violently partisan. It gave reality to the Quaker challenge that the alternative to war is not inactivity or cowardice but **irresistible and constructive good will.**

One of the Committee's first war relief projects —conscientious objectors assembling houses for French refugees (1917-20).

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO

Famine in Russia drew Service Committee workers to the Soviet State as early as 1917. Others went to Poland and Serbia. In the following years, countless Russian, Polish and Serbian peasants were saved from starvation. The people of entire provinces were given seeds, tools, sheep, horses, as well as food and clothing, in an effort to restore the ravaged countryside. Medical service for children and refugees was an important part of the Russian program during the epidemic of typhus and cholera. Stationed at one gateway from Russia through which were pouring the returning refugees, a Quaker anti-typhus unit helped to save Europe from the threat of this terrible disease. In Poland, a large business in embroideries was developed to help the women; an orphanage and an agricultural school (later continued by the Polish government) were established; large-scale farming and health services aided more than 25,000 families.

In 1918, news that Germany was starving touched Quaker sensibilities. Promptly after the Armistice a delegation from the Committee entered Germany and Austria and found malnutrition affecting hundreds of thousands of children with rickets and tuberculosis. The Committee bought cows and milk for Austria and became the largest milk distributor in Vienna. Coal was hauled to heat the hospitals and, among other services, the Quaker workers trained and sent out traveling teachers of hygiene who taught children and adults how to avoid tuberculosis.

In Germany, two periods of child-feeding were maintained in the years from 1920 to 1924. During the first feeding program, the Service Committee cooperated with an American fund-raising committee under the leadership of Herbert Hoover; during the second, a similar committee was led by General Allen who, returning from Germany as commander of the American Army of Occupation, aroused public sympathy for the suffering there. Carefully organized, the German child-feeding programs served more than a million children daily. Quaker food reached into every town and hamlet and touched the imagination of the German people so that even today they retain appreciative remembrance of this "service of love".

The Effect of Quaker War Relief

Who could foretell the results of these labors in Europe? The open door that the Committee had in Nazi Germany until the involvement of the United States in the present war unquestionably can be attributed to confidence established twenty years ago. The feeding of children on both sides of the war in Spain likewise was possible because of past experiences. Channels of usefulness in America opened because of the earlier work abroad.

One of the unexpected results of this European work, and perhaps its greatest reward, has been its enriching effect on the spiritual life of the Society of Friends. The young men and women who experienced this practical application of the spiritual testimony of Friends returned with a deepened insight into life and an enlarged outlook on the responsibilities of Christian people. Many who today are Quaker leaders discovered during those years the power of good will as a reconciling force in human affairs. Because of this, the Committee constantly seeks mature young people who are willing to devote themselves to volunteer work among their less fortunate fellow-men.

A Continuing Service of Good Will

Permanent centers to promote international good will were established in Berlin, Vienna, Geneva and Paris, as an outgrowth of the Committee's initial work in Europe.

These centers have been the joint concern of both English and American Friends and have been staffed, when possible, by representatives from both countries. Despite political changes, most of the Quaker Centers continue to exist. In times of oppression, distressed men and women naturally have turned to the Centers for help. Thus, in 1934, the Vienna Center became responsible for large scale relief following the Socialist upheaval and, until total war closed the avenues of escape, all the Centers were inextricably involved in the plight of the refugees from Central Europe. Additional Centers have been opened as the need in other parts of Europe and in the Orient increased. Even now, the Quaker Centers are operating in German-occupied Europe under the care of European Friends.

From time to time Quaker commissioners have visited the Centers on their travels as "ambassadors of good will". They have sought out and encouraged isolated religious groups in Scandinavia, Central Europe and the Orient. They have studied the cause of conflict between whites and natives in South Africa. They have presented the claims of persecuted minorities to high government officials, as in 1938, when they pleaded the case of the Jews before the Gestapo in Germany and won permission to aid their migration to other lands. They have investigated the condition of conquered nations, as in Poland in 1939, and laid the foundation for American relief work. They have visited England in recent months to press the case of the starving people of occupied Europe in the hope that food might be sent in through the blockade. Such missions are conducted quietly and in a conciliatory spirit. Rarely are Quaker commissioners rebuffed in their efforts to inquire sympathetically into tangled situations.

Return to War Relief

The modern phase of the Service Committee's war relief may be dated from the Civil War in Spain, in which the Committee helped sufferers on both sides of the conflict. From 1937 until after the close of the war, American and British workers distributed food, clothing and medical supplies among the needy civilian population. Three children's hospitals in the southeastern part of Spain were operated by the Committee and close to half a million children were fed daily for a period of months.

When the war ended, thousands of Spanish refugees crossed the border into Southern France where similar services were set up by British and American Friends. Accordingly, when France itself was in need of help, a staff of workers was already in the field ready to serve. As long as part of France remained unoccupied, an American staff worked with French and other European colleagues in Marseille, Toulouse, Perpignan, Montauban and Auch.

The relief program included supplementary meals to thousands of school children daily; milk clinics provided for 10,000 infants each day; village rehabilitation in Penne and Puycelci; feeding and distribution of clothing in internment camps; children's colonies giving complete care to hundreds of children; and relief and emigration services for refugees who were able to leave France and begin a new life in another country.

Since the total occupation, three American workers are remaining there to administer distribution of small quantities of food to the refugee camps. The supplies had been turned over to Secours Quaker, which was organized with French Quaker membership before the severing of diplomatic relations between the United States government and the Vichy government.

Cooperation with English Quakers

Cooperating with the land where the Quaker testimony originated, the American Friends Service Committee helps to support the work of English Quakers both in England and in China.

In England, the Friends War Relief Service has enlisted about 500 young men and women to give first aid and social services for their countrymen who have been bombed out of their homes. Large scale services are rendered in air raid shelters, in rest centers for the homeless, and in rural hostels for evacuated children. American Friends provide $10,000 a month toward financing the program. Two young Friends from the United States are representing the Committee on the staff of the Friends War Relief Service.

British and American Quakers are working together in administering the Friends Ambulance Unit in China. This volunteer group of pacifists runs a medical supply transport service in Free China. It also operates two mobile field surgeries and furnishes personnel to private and government relief agencies.

London evacuee children open a gift of chocolate at a Friends' hostel in the country.

The trucks used by the Unit are repaired in their own garages and machine shops. Offices were opened in Calcutta to purchase supplies in India and forward goods and medical supplies into China. During 1942, eighty-four men — Chinese, Canadians, British, Americans — were engaged in these projects and sixteen men were in training or en route to China. The FAU China Convoy has become truly an international fellowship fulfilling the hopes of its sponsors that this work might contribute to a better understanding between Chinese and Western people, working together as equals. It also serves as an example of Anglo-American cooperation.

Financial support for this work comes from British, Chinese, and American sources. The American funds are provided by United China Relief, Inc., of which the Service Committee is a Participating Agency.

Clothing is needed

Wherever workers wearing the Quaker star go to administer food relief, there also bales of clothing must follow, for hunger and rags go hand in hand. As often as possible shipments of clothing are made from the Service Committee's store rooms on the east and west coasts, to distressed groups in America, such as migrants, sharecroppers and coal mining communities, and to China, England, and Santo Domingo. During 1942, thirty-eight tons of clothing were sent from this country and distributed to children and internees in France. Six tons of clothing are now available for distribution to refugees in Switzerland. It is hoped that permission soon will be granted the Committee to ship wearing apparel, as well as other necessities to the very needy in Casablanca, Morocco and Spain.

The work of clothing relief is made possible through the donations of thousands of people of good will — Friends and others. Some people knit or sew at home, others meet in groups under the auspices of Friends Meetings, churches or clubs, others work in independent groups. Some collect and renovate used clothing and shoes. Some contribute money to purchase materials and clothing and to help defray freight charges. Whatever form the contribution takes, it has its value in helping to save human life and in bringing comfort to many individuals among the millions who are suffering.

Aid to Refugees

Many refugees from all over Europe have fled into neutral countries either for a permanent haven, or as a temporary stop-over on their way to the Americas. Service Committee workers in Lisbon can expedite their journey with visa and transportation aid, or can help with more immediate financial assistance. In Switzerland, the ever increasing stream of refugees is receiving assistance, and Service Committee representatives in Geneva hope to establish a home for the most needy refugee children. Personnel has arrived in Spain, hoping to be able to assist the innumerable homeless refugees from France now located in that country.

Last September a worker was sent to Casablanca to investigate the condition of Central European and Spanish refugees in North Africa. He reported a great need for clothing and personal services on the part of the 6,000 refugees who are interned as well as many more who are at liberty, although dependent for support. Additional workers are now assigned to develop this relief service.

In spite of the sharp decline in immigration to the United States, there is still need for friendly services to those refugees who are arriving and to those who have been here for some time. A personalized bureau for individual exiles assists in matters of emigration aid, technical advice, and readjustment in new surroundings. During the summer, hostels are operated where refugees and Americans are brought together for an appreciative exchange between the cultures of the New World and the Old.

About 150,000 refugees have sought haven in Latin America. The Service Committee has been able to assist quite a few in securing employment in Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. The Spanish refugees in the Dominican Republic have faced the most deplorable conditions and until recently the Committee maintained a worker among them. Funds continue to flow for the relief of distressed individuals and especially to enable broken families to get together and start life again in the New World.

Problems in America

There are chasms of misunderstanding in America often nearly as wide as between different countries. Industrial strife, racial antagonisms, bitterness arising from poverty and unemploy-

Fifty families are now established in their own homes at Penn-Craft. Neighbors cooperated with each other in the construction of the sturdy and attractive stone houses.

ment draw the Committee's energies no less than suffering abroad. As early as 1922 the Service Committee started to feed children of unemployed coal miners in the bituminous coal fields. As the distress deepened with the further collapse of the industry, this relief work grew to one of major proportions. Aggravated by the depression, by 1931, idleness and hunger gripped the coal fields of many states. With funds largely furnished by the American Relief Administration Children's Fund, the Committee fed a maximum of 40,000 children daily in school houses throughout the coal fields of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee.

Outgrowths of this emergency feeding have been several experiments to find a solution to large-scale unemployment and to develop new skills for displaced workers. Miners have been trained in carpentry and handicrafts; trades and small factories have been started. Some of the men have been taught subsistence farming as a partial escape from an industry that in the long run will not support them. At Penn-Craft in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, a new community has taken shape in stone and timber where former miners are finding a new basis for self support through cooperative farming and industry. They have helped each other build their houses and together operate a small knitting factory. In the process of finding independence they gradually are repaying the investment of $2,000 per family. The present demands of industry for war production has removed, for the time being, the cause of unemployment in this field. But inevitably the coal industry will sag again. Penn-Craft, which now touches only fifty families, may then come to have larger significance as a contribution to the thinking of America in the field of rural and industrial rehabilitation. In South Carolina a similar project has been started among sharecroppers.

Education for Peace and Reconstruction

The Peace Section, founded in 1927, has had two major programs — work among college students and young people and Institutes of International Relations. The program among college students has grown until in recent years more than a hundred students have spent each summer in rural and small urban areas, engaged not only in educational programs, but also in local service projects. Several of these groups have been located in Mexico, where together with young Mexicans they have drained swamps for malaria control, installed sewer systems and built school houses. The projects have proved stimulating experiences in inter-American fellowship.

The Institutes of International Relations held each summer on college campuses across the country, attract students, teachers and community leaders to discussions of international, social and religious approaches to the solution of world discord. With the world engulfed in war, these Institutes are particularly important as forums through which the American public can express its concern for achieving a just and durable peace. Much thinking and planning is being carried on by the Peace Section in collaboration with other church and public agencies to discover the essential conditions on which peace can be built.

The Social-Industrial Section which is responsible for the development of Penn-Craft and other rehabilitation projects, also directs a work camp program in which young men and women are given opportunities to understand social and economic problems through working with people in distressed communities. To backward rural areas and centers of rapid industrial change, these volunteer workers go, paying part of their own expenses and working eight hours a day on some project for the good of the community. As they wield the pick or shovel, or gather in the evening for discussion, they learn at first hand about the problems of the area, probing for causes and exploring solutions. Other young people work in settlements in city slums or in camps for underprivileged children. Those who participate in this volunteer work program, are helped to gain a vivid acquaintance with the world they are facing. In providing young people with such experiences in national and international problems, the Committee feels it is performing one of its most creative services.

Civilian Public Service

Conscientious objectors have been given a legal status and a job to do in this war under Civilian Public Service. The Selective Service and Training Act provides "work of national importance under civilian direction" for men whose local draft boards have judged them to be sincere conscientious objectors to war by reason of their religious training and belief. Selective Service asked the American Friends Service Committee, the Brethren Service Committee, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors to direct this work. Other church bodies and peace organizations represented on the National Service Board for Religious Objectors share in the support of the program.

Men are drafted into Civilian Public Service through the same process and for the same period of service as those in the army. The camps are usually old Civilian Conservation Corps sites and the work projects are forest clearance, soil conservation, operation of soil and forest research plants, and fighting forest fires. There has been a steady broadening of the work program to include staffing of hospitals, farm furloughs, medical research, rural sanitation, training for international administration, and staffing of the centers where the Japanese Americans are interned. Many other service opportunities are being developed, and a goal has been set to obtain at least 2500 individual special service opportunities for Civilian Public Service men in 1943.

In January, 1943, there were seventy-one camp units in Civilian Public Service, of which seventeen were administered by the Friends Service Committee and one jointly by the three church agencies. There were then 5,778 men in Civilian Public Service. Of these, 1,544 were in camps operated by Friends. One quarter of those in Friends camps were Friends.

Forest fire prevention and control by scientific methods save money and valuable natural resources. Such work is included in the "work of national importance" being performed by conscientious objectors who have been assigned by their draft boards to CPS camps.

War sufferers in the United States

One of the casualties of the war in this country is the group of Japanese Americans who lived on the West Coast, 70% of whom are American citizens. Forced to leave their homes, businesses and many personal belongings on the Pacific Coast, they were transferred to Relocation Centers from which it is now necessary for them to have assistance in order to establish a new life.

The job of moving the occupants of these Relocation Centers into American communities and finding work for them in their new environment is a problem on which the Committee is working. It is important to get these people back into normal communities now while there is a demand for their skills due to the labor shortage. It is also valuable in preparation for a peaceful post-war world that Caucasian Americans learn to live beside their brothers of another color.

Hostels are being set up in which individuals who have received government clearance for placement may live in the period between leaving the Center and actual employment. Assistance is given in finding positions, and educational work is paving the way for the required "community acceptance". The War Relocation Authority has approved this work of finding employment for evacuees in areas designated by the Government.

When the evacuation order was given, the Service Committee workers, in cooperation with church groups in the area, assisted the Japanese and Japanese Americans in disposing of their property and businesses, and in making arrangements for them to leave their homes. These workers have continued to assist the evacuees in the Centers by correspondence, visitation, and by furnishing educational and recreational materials. Similar work is being done in Honolulu, Hawaii. A staff member sent from the Philadelphia office, cooperates with local Friends in their program of visitation and friendly service to Japanese in that area.

The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, which the Committee helped to establish, has undertaken the difficult task of finding new places of study for the Japanese American college students. To date, about 1000 students have been relocated in inland institutions approved by the Army. The Council will continue to help obtain scholarships and make placements for these people to continue their scholastic life.

THE FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL

The Fellowship Council, which works closely with the Service Committee although it is an independent agency, seeks to interpret the spiritual message which motivates the work of the Committee. Since 1936 it has assisted individual groups to become established Meetings. A further activity of the Council is intervisitation among Friends' groups, covering nearly every area of American Quakerdom.

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The American Friends Service Committee derives its funds principally from private individuals, organizations and foundations. The Committee is essentially an administrative agency and its fund-raising efforts are modest. To finance its larger projects, the Committee depends upon extra-budgetary income obtained through special campaigns or from other fund-raising organizations. During 1942 the Committee's total income approximated $2,000,000.00. A financial statement is contained in the Committee's Annual Report, available on request.

Other pamphlets describing in greater detail the work of the individual sections are available. You are invited to apply for free copies of this literature. We will be glad to have you state the field of work in which you are interested.

Inquiries and contributions should be addressed to:

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

TWENTY SOUTH TWELFTH STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Revised Edition—1-10-41
Second Revision—2-25-42
Third Revision—2-25-43

No. 223—15M

Printed in U. S. A.